

A

REVIEW

OF THE

STATE

OF THE

BRITISH NATION.

Saturday, May 24. 1707.

I Cannot but adjourn the Course of for the at present necessary Diversion of the REVIEW, I mean as to the our *Miscellanea*; and the Case is as follows, Publick, for a while, to make Way

MISCELLANEA.

I Have often took the Freedom to call upon our News-Writers and Authors of the publick Prints, to caution them against telling us Impossibilities and Stories, that shock the very Readers at first View, that give one's Head a Knock when they come to be read, and makes a Man's Tongue falter just in the very Expression; Things, after they have dictated to, printed at, and revised from the Press without blushing, are apt to make the Reader blush to repeat, and which

as they are ridiculous, and exposes the Reputation of the Writer, so they seem to be a Sarcasm on the Understanding of his Readers, as if he could believe them capable of so much Ignorance, as not to see, or seeing, be content with such Blunders.

To say it is translated right, has been an old Excuse, and we are, it seems, to allow foreign Nonsense to be translated into English Nonsense——But then the Translator might give it us as Nonsense, and tell us

us he knew it; and not leave us to take it for a serious Story, when it ought to pass for a Lampoon.

I have not often of late troubled this Paper with these Follies, but the Reader will bear with it, when the Variety is so remarkable, and the Reasons of it now, I believe, will appear to be very just.

First, In a certain printed Paper of May we are told, That three *English* Ships were brought into *Dunkirk*, One with Wine and Cloth, Value 12000 Livres, One with Tobacco, &c. Value 80000 Livres, One with Rice, Wine, Tobacco, and Cloth, Value 2000 Livres.

For the First; It must be a strange kind of Ship, and more strange Cargoe, which being loaden with Wine and Cloth should be worth but 12000 Livres, which is under a thousand Pound; but lest it should be an Error of the Press, and a Cypher wanting, be put 12000 for 120000— and I should be far from insisting on Typographical Mistakes; and I would desire the Gentleman to tell us, from what Port in the World, or to what Port in the World, does any Ship go to or come from *England* loaden with Wine and Cloth, and I think I may affirm, not to or from any one Part or Place in the whole World——So that this must be a Ship a coming Home from the Moon, or some *Terra Incognita* of a World, where there is a Trade we never heard of.

If any Man may object, that *Holland* or *Hamburg* sends us *Rhenish* Wine and Cloth, 'tis easily reply'd, that all those Ships bring a Variety of other things also, and cannot be said to be so loaden; also the Quantity of *Rhenish* brought is a Trifle; and if the Ship, tho' but a *Dogger* or *Hoy*, were entirely loaden with Cloth, the Value must be prodigiously more than 12000 Livres, nay tho' a Cypher were wanting, and it were 120000, which is not above 10000 *l. Sterling*; so that this is all a Piece of Inconsistency, and either there is no such Ship brought into *Dunkirk*, or the Writer of the News from *Dunkirk* is an *Ignoramus*; or he has sent this News to *England* on purpose to banter us, as if he had said, there was an *East-India* Ship taken Homeward bound for *England* loaden with red Herrings.

The second Head is a Ship from *Virginia* loaden with Tobacco worth 80000 Livres; this is an improbable Value too in the other Extreme, Tobacco, before the *English* Duty be paid upon it, being but of very small Value compared to the Bulk; but I shall not insist upon Trifles.

The next is yet a more miraculous Affair than the first, and I cannot but wonder a little at its Publication; The third Ship taken from the *English*, say they, is One loaden with Rice, Wine, Tobacco and Skins, whence she should come with that miraculous Mixture, I cannot imagine; Rice we have indeed from *Carolina*, but as to Wine indeed we have been promis'd fine things that way, but I have heard of no Produce yet, nor will the Merchants there make any Pretensions to it; from other Parts we may have Rice, as from *India*, *Turkey*, or *Barbary*, but then they must beg your Pardon as to Tobacco or Wine——Upon the whole, these monstrous Cargoes are very unaccountable, and may give us some Ground to hope, no such Ships at all have been brought into *Dunkirk*.

But now we have another unaccountable Story, on Board the *Royal Oak* Man of War in the late Engagement, viz. That a Boy's Head was shot off in the Powder Room of the Ship.

Now if this was not just as possible as to say, a Boy's Head was shot off 20 Foot under-ground, I appeal to all, that know any thing of Ships Powder Rooms and great Shot, to determine: The Powder Room of a Man of War, we all know, is down to the very Bottom of the Ship, under all their other Rooms or Places of Store, generally in the Fore part of the Ship, as I understand it, so plac'd, that it may be out of Danger, either from Fire within or Shot without; what kind of a Shot it must be, must come into the Powder Room, and which way it got in, is a thing, I dare say, the Relator can give no Account of; If it went in dry, it would in all Probability have fir'd the Powder, and blown up the Ship; if it went in under Water, it would have sunk the Ship; besides that, I believe, all Men will allow, it was impossible a Shot could reach the Powder

der Room, either wet or dry; and so much for ignorant Mistakes.

I cannot leave the Subject however, till I come to something, which, I think, has a yet more dangerous and mischievous Design it; and in this I shall be obliged to be more particular.

There is a News-writer in some Part of Britain, call'd Mr. DYER, whether it be the same that lives in London, and has been so often reprovd both in publick and in private, and sometimes corrected too for scandalous and false News, I do not determine: But the Character this Gentleman's Paper has in the Part of Britain, where I now converse with such things, is this; That if there be any bad News to be had, he is certain to be the first to tell it, and so make the most of it; and if ever he adds his own Remarks, they are as malicious as he can make them, and both these things will be made good to a Nicety in the following Story.

I am also to remark one thing more on this News-writer, which I have often been inform'd of since my being in Scotland, viz. That he is pleas'd to vary his Letter from England thither, as Occasions may offer, and leave out on one hand, and add on the other, things of particular Kinds, which are in, or not in his Letter in England, as he sees Occasion; and this is one Reason, why I take Notice of the Matter before me; for sure he cannot have the Face in England to write what follows, or certainly not the Fate to do it unpunish'd.

First, of the Victory gain'd by the Duke of Berwick in Spain, in order to magnifie it to the Understanding of the People in remote Parts of this Island, he has a Paragraph in his Letter of May the... and which I transcribe Verbatim.

" The Lord Buckly, Brother-in-Law to
" the Duke of Berwick, is arriv'd at Paris
" with the Particulars of the Battle fought
" in Spain, which are as follow: That the
" Confederates lost 6000 Men kill'd on the
" Spot, 8000 taken Prisoners; amongst
" which are the General D'Arna, 2 Lieuten-
" ant Generals, 8 Major Generals, 12 Bri-
" gadier Generals, 20 Colonels, and 80
" Inferiour Officers, 24 Pieces of Cannon,
" and 120 Colours and Standards: That 6
" English, 5 Dutch, and 3 Portuguese Bat-

" talions surrendered themselves at Discre-
" tion, that my Lord Galloway is dead of his
" Wounds, that General Das Minas is shot
" thro' the Body, and that the Army is
" marching to Valencia.

That these things are possible in the Circumstances, which things were in on that side, I believe, even Mr. Dyer himself will not affirm; That it is extravagantly beyond all the Accounts, even the French themselves have publish'd, I suppose every body will grant also. What the Design then of magnifying the Conquests of the Enemy beyond all Manner of Probabilities, no Man can imagine, other than what I have often observed to be the Reason for doing it themselves, viz. To encourage and hearten up their People, and feed them with the Air of Hopes and empty Projects, that they may not make a right Guess at their own Circumstances.

Now if this be the Reason, then this Gentleman must be allow'd to act in Concert with French Power and French Principles, as far as in him lies, to support the drooping Spirits of the Party here, who are embark'd in the same Interest.

Spreading false News has always been counted pernicious to the Government, and often punished by all wise Governments; and among all the Spreadings of false News, I know none more pernicious in its Kind, than magnifying the Losses and Disasters of a Nation, and making them seem greater than really they are.

The same Method this Gentleman News-writer took with our Losses at Sea, when in his first Letters he told us all over England, that the Dunkirk Squadron had taken all our 3 Men of War, and 30 Sail of Merchants Ships, being the whole Fleet that sail'd with them from the Downs; and this Way of magnifying our Losses is not without its Uses, tho' the Delusion lasts but for a while; for if this has taken up the Place of the present Paper, I shall in my next give you a yet larger Account of the Forwardness of this Gentleman and some others, to magnifie our Enemies, and to sink the Honour and Reputation of their own Country.

'Tis enough that I give you the Fact and some necessary Observations upon it, let the Gen-
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